GOLD KEY

THE PHANTOM

NOW ONLY 12¢

THE PHANTOM

10014-211
NOVEMBER

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The Phantom races through seven deadly obstacles to play a fiendish game!

400 YEARS AGO, THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF A PIRATE RAID WAS WASHED UP ON A REMOTE BEACH...

HE WAS THE ***FIRST*** PHANTOM!

GENERATION AFTER GENERATION FOLLOWED! NATIVES, THINKING IT THE SAME MAN, CALLED HIM IMMORTAL!

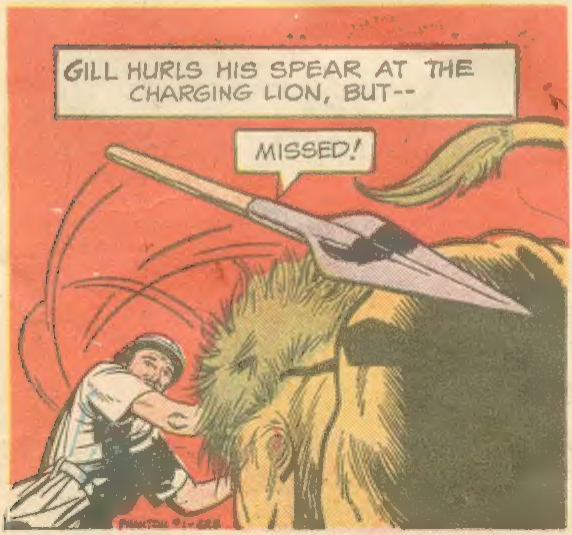
THE PHANTOM

NOW, 16TH OF THE LINE, THE SCOURGE OF EVIL-DOERS...

THE PHANTOM

IN THE BENGALI HIGHLANDS, NEAR THE FABULOUS SILVER PALACE OF PRINCE RAGON, GILL, THE HUNTER, FACES THE MOST UNUSUAL CHALLENGE OF HIS CAREER FOR A MILLION DOLLAR PRIZE IN

The GAME



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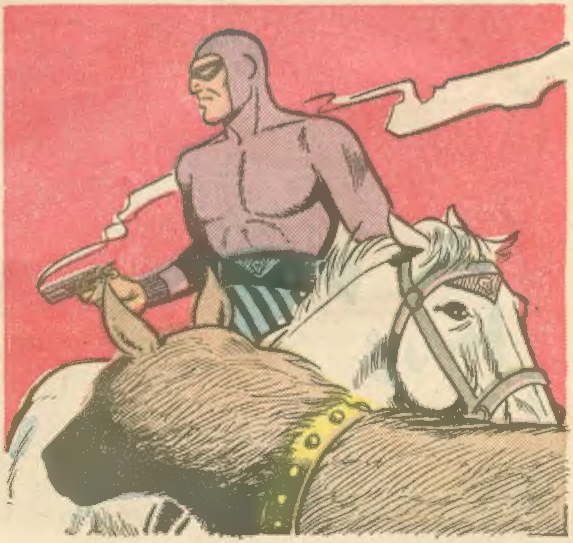
WHAT A DISAPPOINTMENT! NO FIGHT AT ALL! HE'S RUNNING!
BUT HE WAS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED AS A HUNTER, YOUR HIGHNESS!

WHAT A POOR GAME! HE DIDN'T EVEN PASS THE FIRST OBSTACLE! AH HA -- THE LION'S LEAPING!

SUDDENLY, A SHOT--



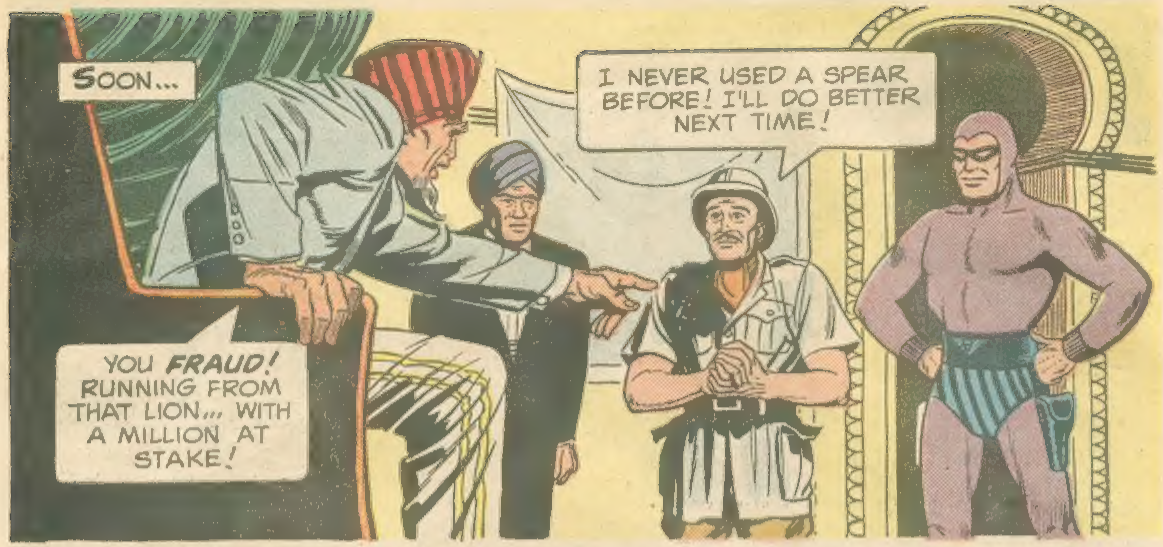
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? --HUNTING LIONS WITH A KNIFE?
ER--IT'S A LONG STORY! SORT OF A CRAZY GAME! BUT I LOST!

THERE'S A MILLION IN GOLD ON A BALCONY OF THAT PALACE! ALL MINE--
--IF I COULD HAVE PASSED SEVEN OBSTACLES TO REACH IT!

PRINCE RAGON'S GAME! I'VE HEARD RUMORS ABOUT IT!
THEY ASKED WHAT I WANTED MOST! I SAID A MILLION! WHAM--THERE IT WAS!

--AND YOU HAD TO PASS THESE OBSTACLES WITH JUST A SPEAR AND KNIFE!

YOU ARE BOTH UNDER ARREST...
...BY ORDER OF PRINCE RAGON!

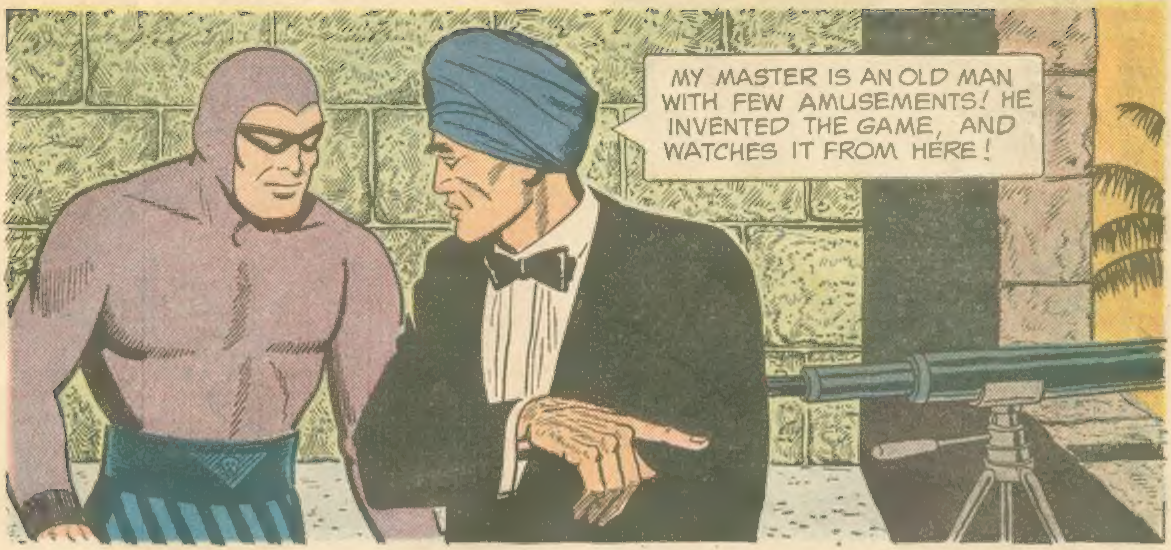

SOON...
I NEVER USED A SPEAR BEFORE! I'LL DO BETTER NEXT TIME!
YOU FRAUD! RUNNING FROM THAT LION... WITH A MILLION AT STAKE!

THERE WILL BE NO NEXT TIME FOR YOU!
WHO IS THIS MASKED HOODLUM WHO SPOILED MY GAME?

NATURALLY?... MY LION!... ON MY GROUNDS! TAKE OFF THAT MASK!
I SAW A LION CHASING A MAN!... SO NATURALLY, I SHOT THE LION!

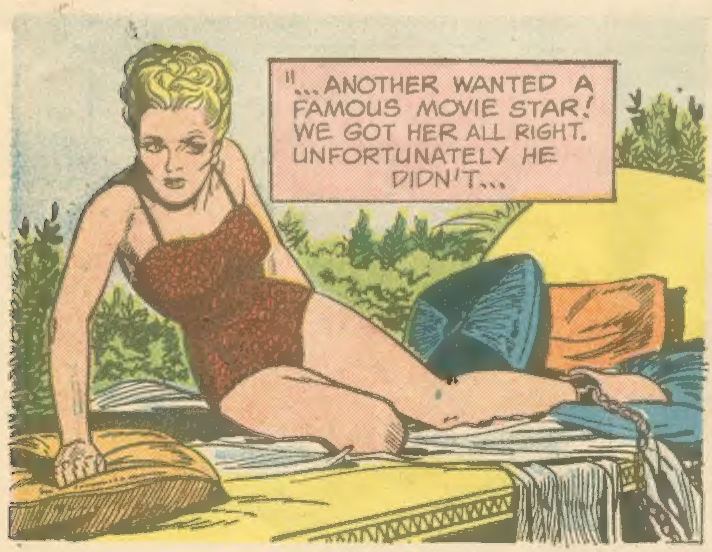
SIRE, THE SERVANTS SAY HE IS THE PHANTOM OF THE JUNGLE! THEY SAY HE'S FOUR CENTURIES OLD, AND CANNOT DIE!

...CANNOT DIE? WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT!


MY MASTER IS AN OLD MAN WITH FEW AMUSEMENTS! HE INVENTED THE GAME, AND WATCHES IT FROM HERE!

IF A MAN CAN PASS SEVEN OBSTACLES IN THE VALLEY, HE REACHES HIS GREATEST DESIRE!
IN GILL'S CASE, IT WAS A MILLION DOLLARS!

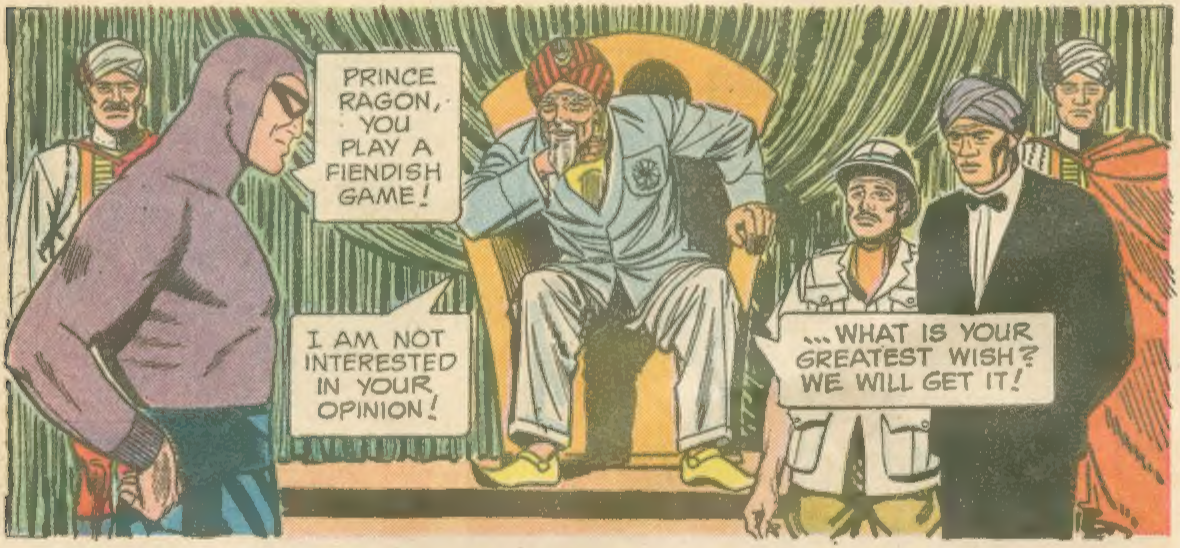
"...ONE FELLOW'S GREATEST DESIRE WAS A BARREL OF DIAMONDS...


"...ANOTHER WANTED A FAMOUS MOVIE STAR! WE GOT HER ALL RIGHT. UNFORTUNATELY HE DIDN'T...

"...A SCIENTIST WISHED FOR A SUPPOSEDLY EXTINCT BIRD! WE FOUND TWO!"

MANY HAVE TRIED, BUT NONE HAVE REACHED THEIR GOAL!
THEN, NO ONE'S EVER FINISHED THE GAME ALIVE! WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO GILL?

I DON'T KNOW! THIS HAS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE!


PRINCE RAGON, YOU PLAY A FIENDISH GAME!
I AM NOT INTERESTED IN YOUR OPINION!
...WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST WISH? WE WILL GET IT!

I WILL NOT PLAY YOUR GAME.
YOU MUST PLAY MY GAME... OR DIE!

I WILL! I'LL DO ANYTHING FOR THAT MILLION! GIVE ME ANOTHER CHANCE!
I'M BORED WITH THIS CHATTER! VIZA, HAVE THEM SHOT!

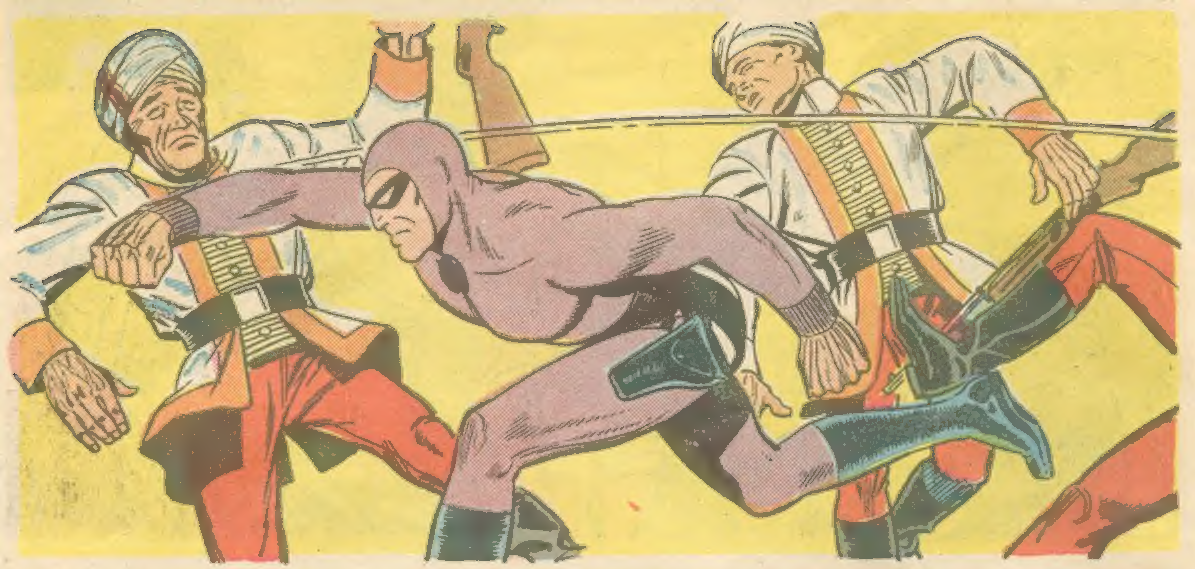
YOUR GAME IS OVER, PRINCE RAGON! IF IT HAPPENS AGAIN, I'LL COME BACK AND PUT A STOP TO IT!
COME BACK? WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING!

I GAVE ORDERS TO HAVE THESE TWO SHOT! HOW DARE THIS -- THIS PHANTOM THREATEN ME?

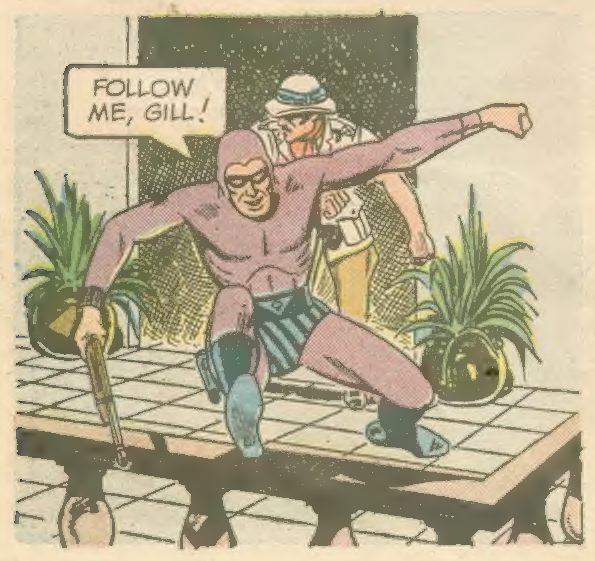
GHOST WHO WALKS? MAN WHO CANNOT DIE? LET'S SEE HOW YOU HANDLE LEAD BULLETS!
TAKE THEM AWAY!

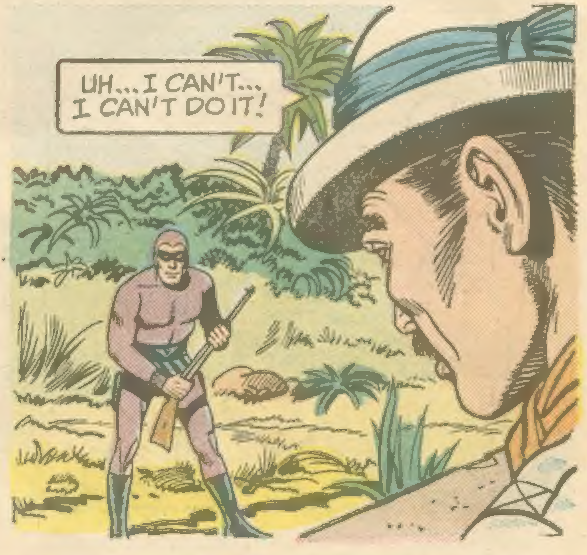
DO YOU WANT TO BE SHOT, GILL?
NO!... WHAT CAN WE DO?

THE PHANTOM MOVES LIKE GREASED LIGHTNING!
FOLLOW ME!



STOP THEM! BLAST IT— STOP THEM!
OUR MEN ARE AFRAID TO SHOOT... FOR FEAR OF HITTING US!

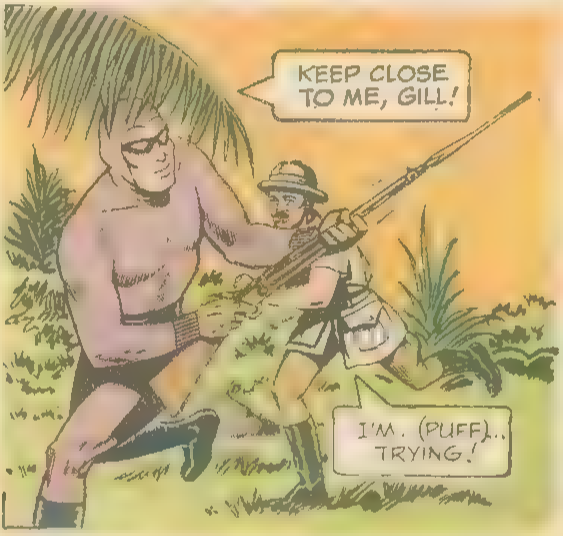

FOLLOW ME, GILL!

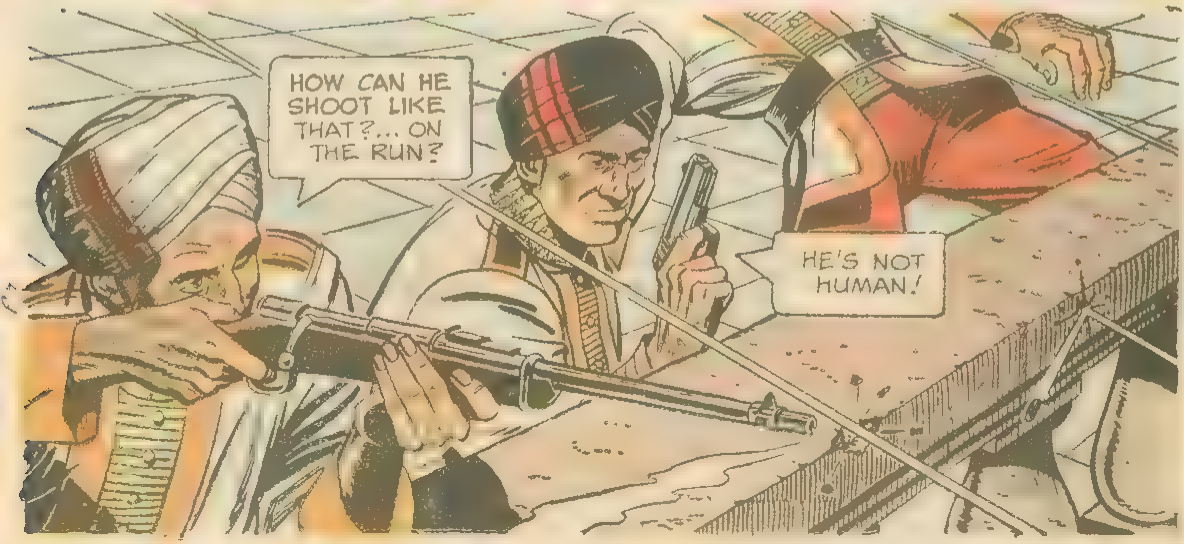

UH... I CAN'T... I CAN'T DO IT!

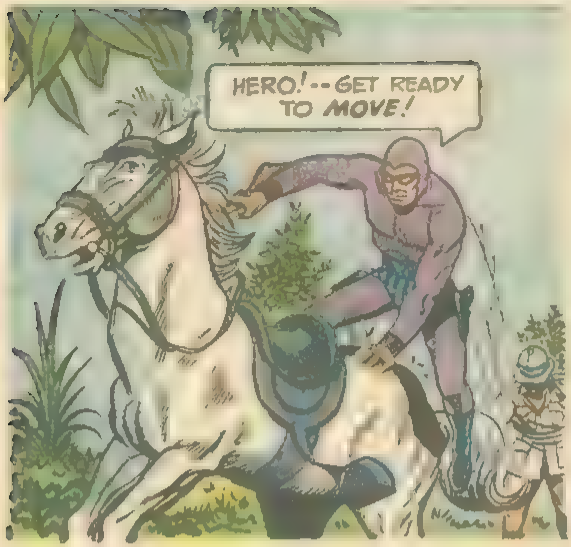
CLOSE YOUR EYES.. AND JUMP!

UH-H-H...
GOT YOU!

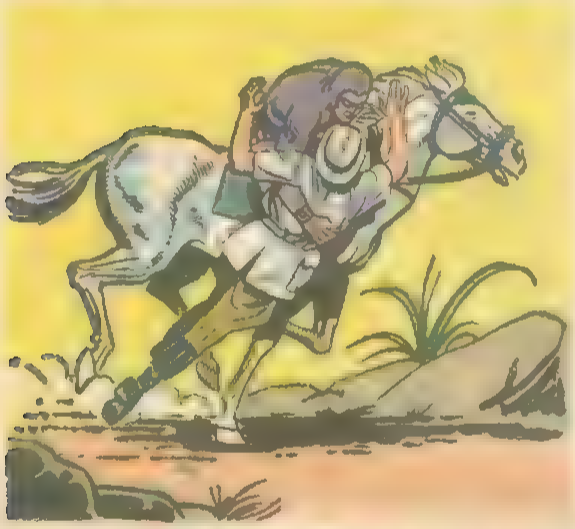
SHOOT THEM DOWN!
WHATEVER HAPPENS... DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE!


KEEP CLOSE TO ME, GILL!
I'M. (PUFF).. TRYING!

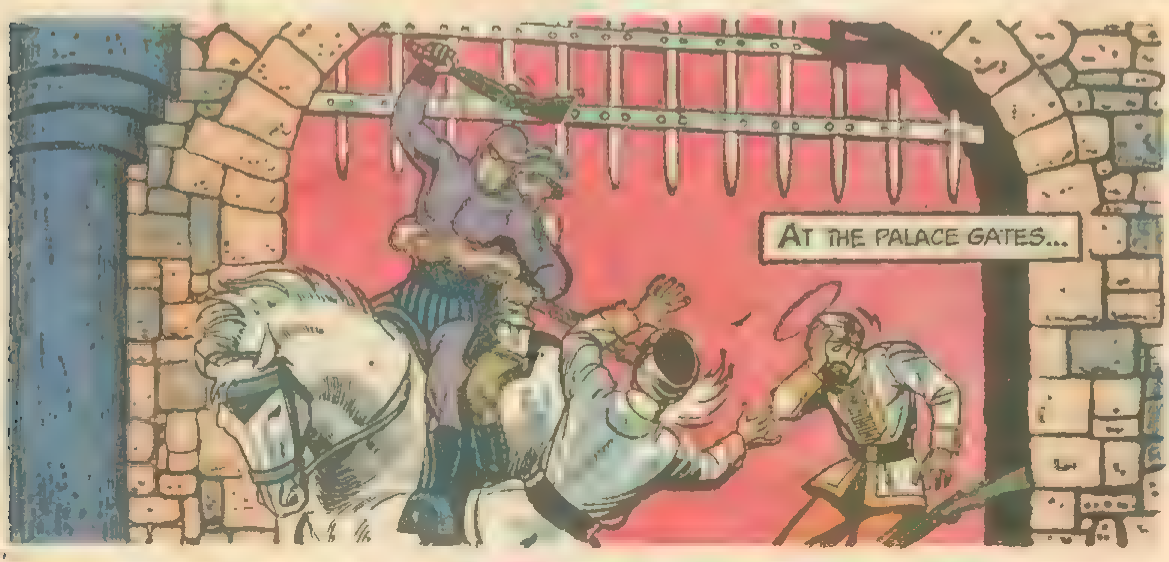

HOW CAN HE SHOOT LIKE THAT?... ON THE RUN?
HE'S NOT HUMAN!


HERO!--GET READY TO MOVE!

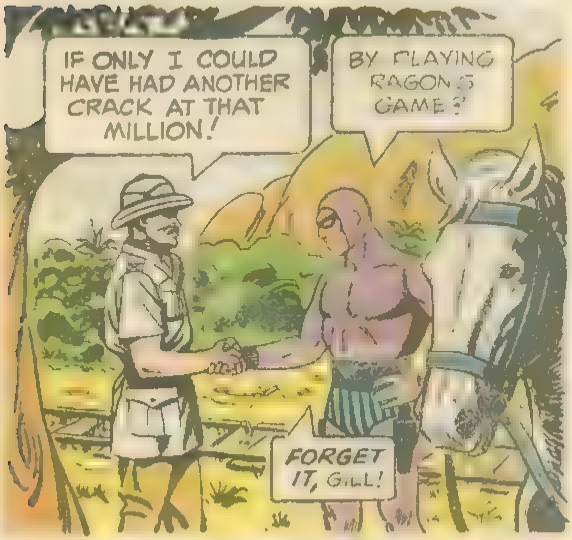
HERE WE COME, GILL! START RUNNING!

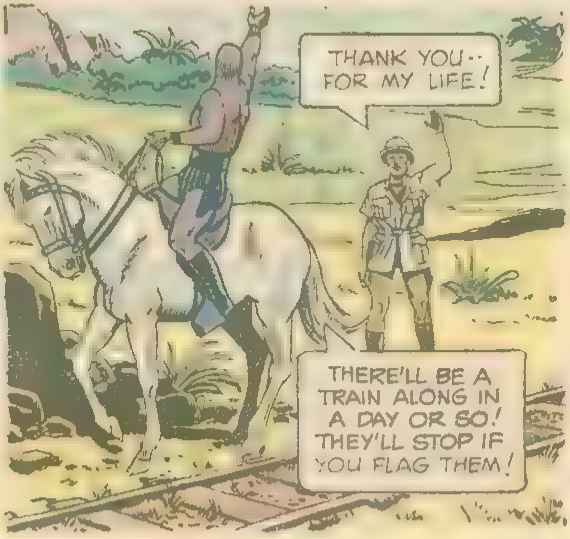


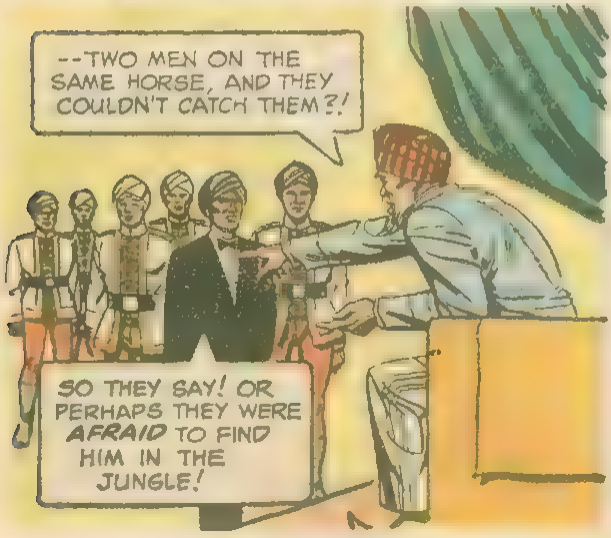
DON'T LET THAT SCOUNDREL GET AWAY!
WHAT A MAGNIFICENT, AMAZING MAN!

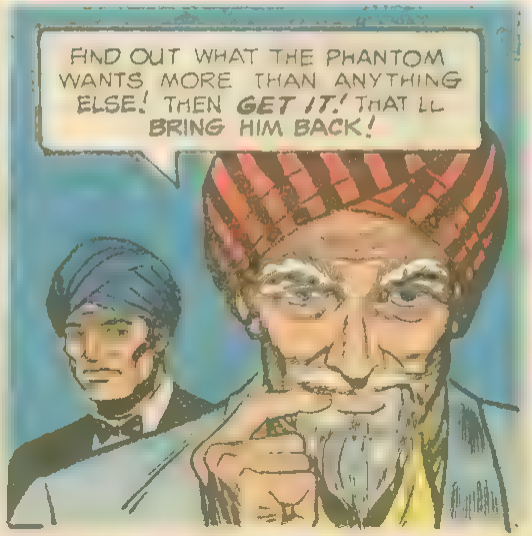

AT THE PALACE GATES...

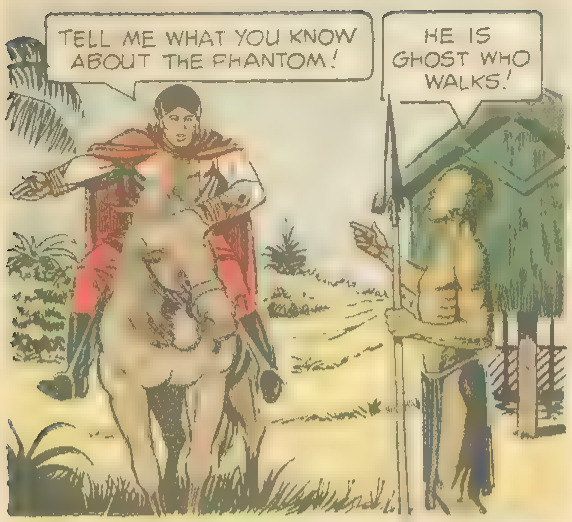
LATER...
I NEVER DREAMED WE'D ESCAPE! IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE!
ANYTHING IMPOSSIBLE IS WORTH TRYING!


IF ONLY I COULD HAVE HAD ANOTHER CRACK AT THAT MILLION!
BY PLAYING RAGON'S GAME?
FORGET IT, GILL!


THANK YOU-- FOR MY LIFE!
THERE'LL BE A TRAIN ALONG IN A DAY OR SO! THEY'LL STOP IF YOU FLAG THEM!

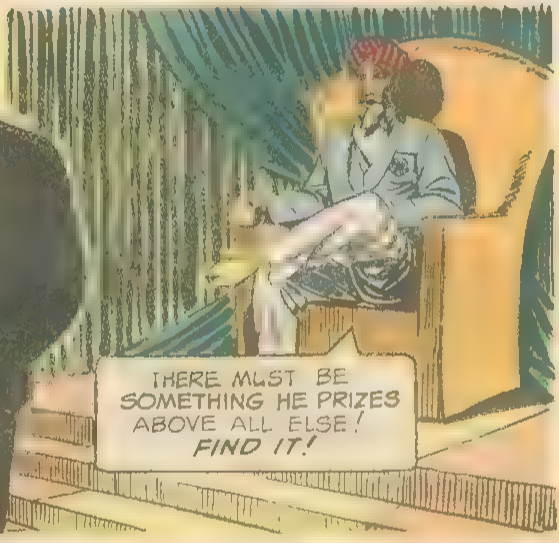

--TWO MEN ON THE SAME HORSE, AND THEY COULDN'T CATCH THEM?!
SO THEY SAY! OR PERHAPS THEY WERE AFRAID TO FIND HIM IN THE JUNGLE!

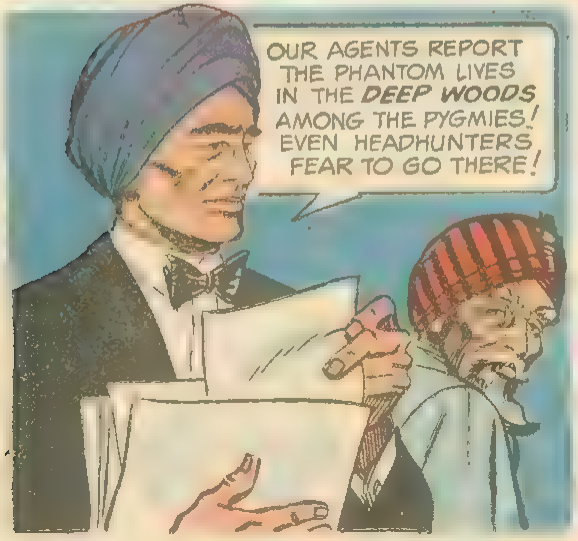

FIND OUT WHAT THE PHANTOM WANTS MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE! THEN GET IT! THAT'LL BRING HIM BACK!


TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE PHANTOM!
HE IS GHOST WHO WALKS!

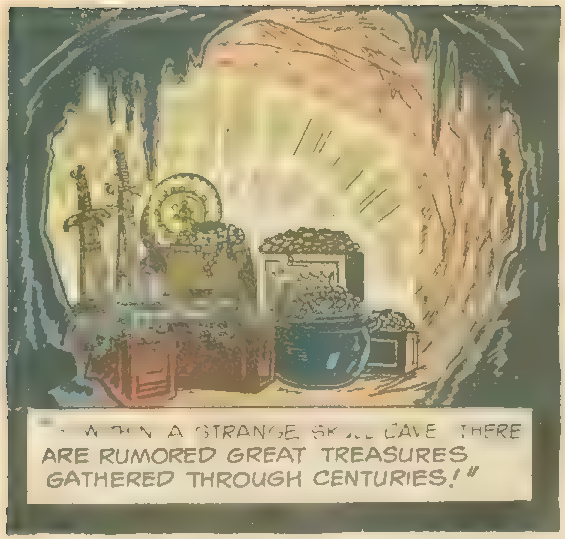
WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE PHANTOM!
WULL--LEMME SEE NOW--

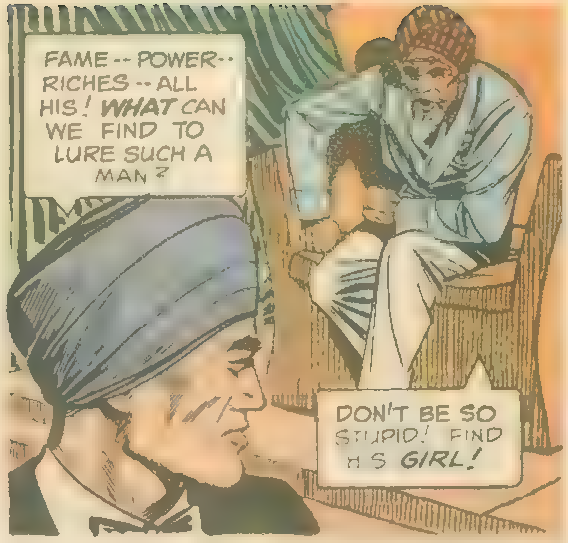
THEY'VE LEARNED NOTHING ABOUT THE PHANTOM, HIGHNESS!

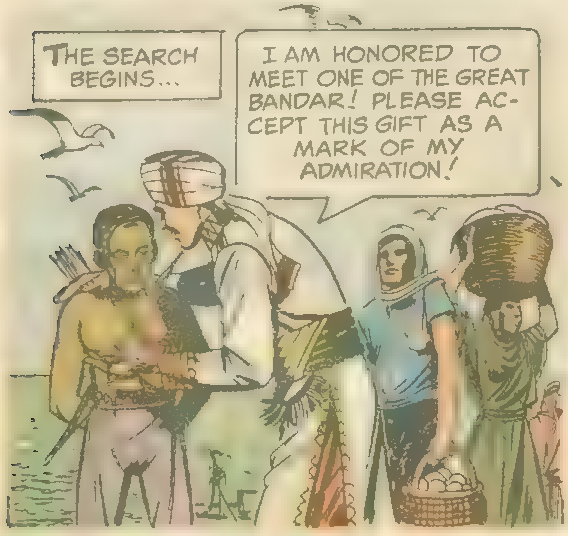

THERE MUST BE SOMETHING HE PRIZES ABOVE ALL ELSE! FIND IT!

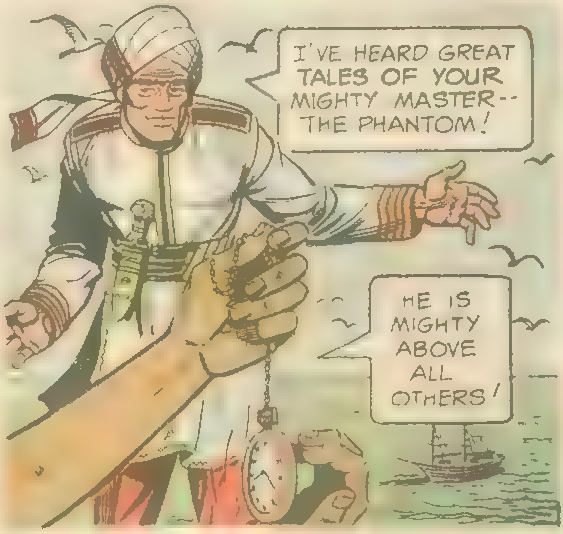

OUR AGENTS REPORT THE PHANTOM LIVES IN THE DEEP WOODS AMONG THE PYGMIES! EVEN HEADHUNTERS FEAR TO GO THERE!

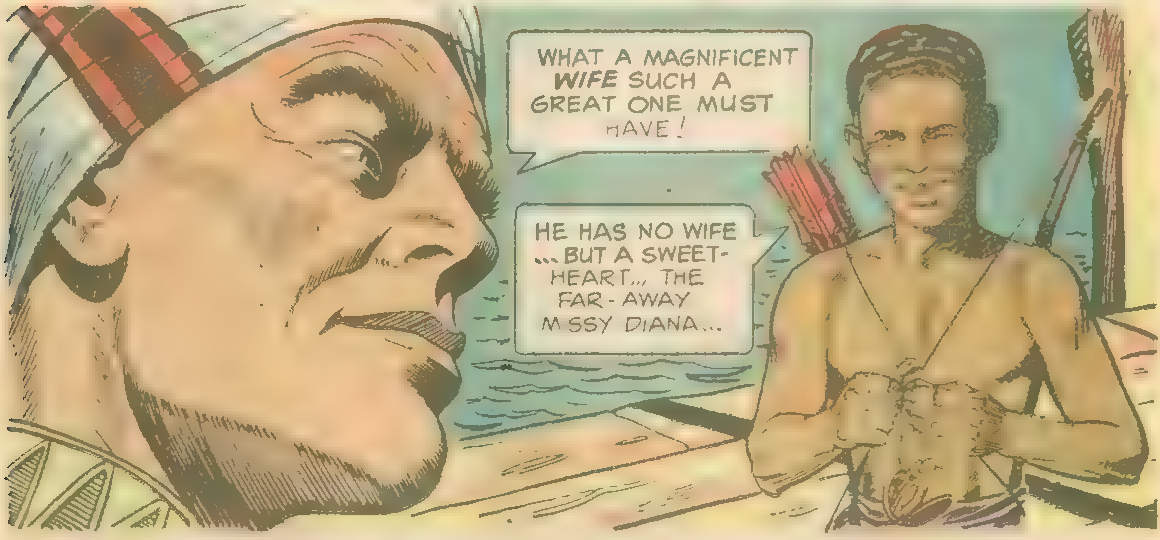
"THEY SAY HE RULES THE JUNGLE FOLK, WHO WORSHIP HIM AS IMMORTAL!"

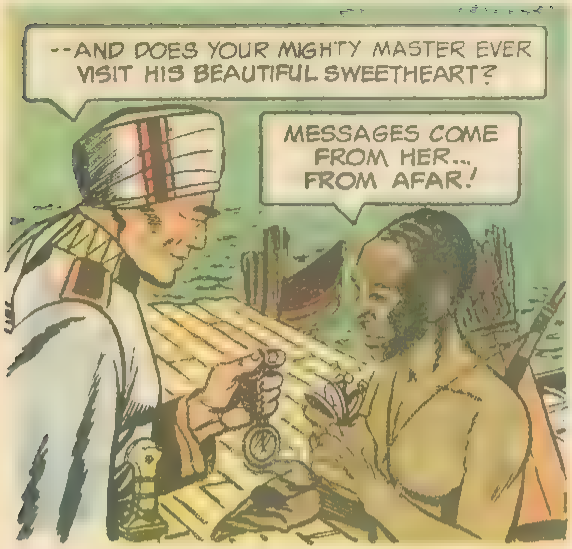

... A STRANGE SKULL CAVE THERE ARE RUMORED GREAT TREASURES GATHERED THROUGH CENTURIES!"


FAME -- POWER -- RICHES -- ALL HIS! WHAT CAN WE FIND TO LURE SUCH A MAN?
DON'T BE SO STUPID! FIND HIS GIRL!

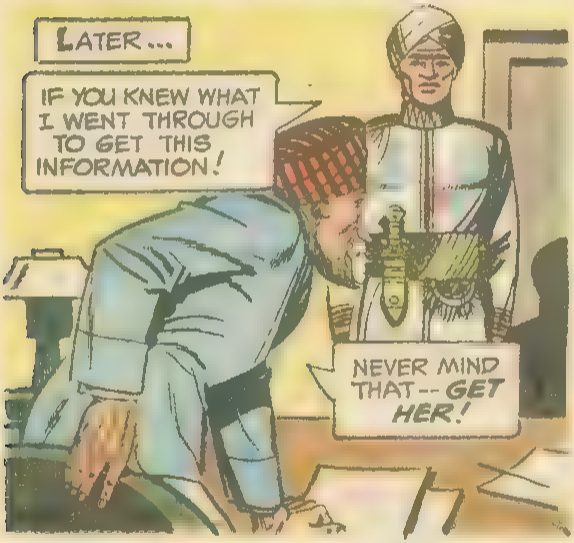

THE SEARCH BEGINS...
I AM HONORED TO MEET ONE OF THE GREAT BANDAR! PLEASE ACCEPT THIS GIFT AS A MARK OF MY ADMIRATION!

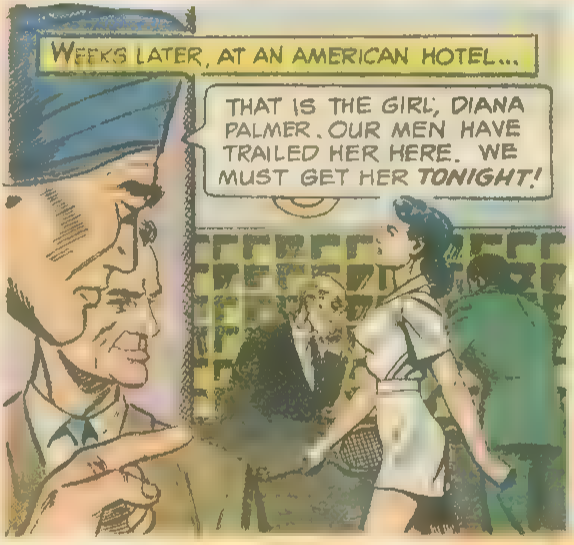

I'VE HEARD GREAT TALES OF YOUR MIGHTY MASTER -- THE PHANTOM!
HE IS MIGHTY ABOVE ALL OTHERS!

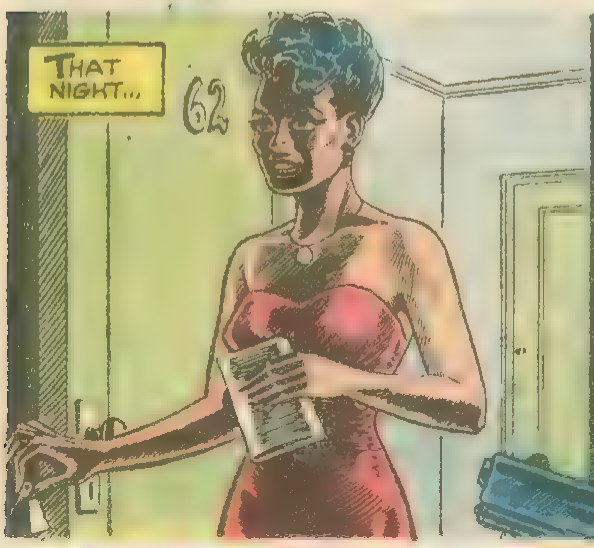

WHAT A MAGNIFICENT WIFE SUCH A GREAT ONE MUST HAVE!
HE HAS NO WIFE ... BUT A SWEETHEART... THE FAR-AWAY MISSY DIANA...


--AND DOES YOUR MIGHTY MASTER EVER VISIT HIS BEAUTIFUL SWEETHEART?
MESSAGES COME FROM HER... FROM AFAR!

I HAVE JOURNEYED TO TOWN TO AWAIT SUCH A MESSAGE!
LET ME SEE IT!

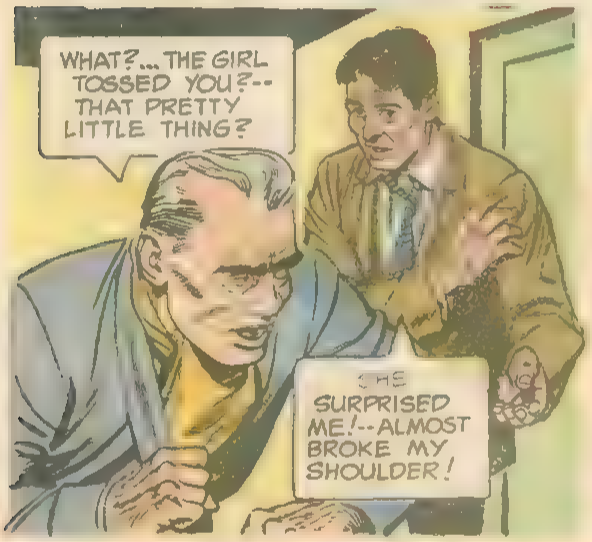

LATER...
IF YOU KNEW WHAT I WENT THROUGH TO GET THIS INFORMATION!
NEVER MIND THAT -- GET HER!

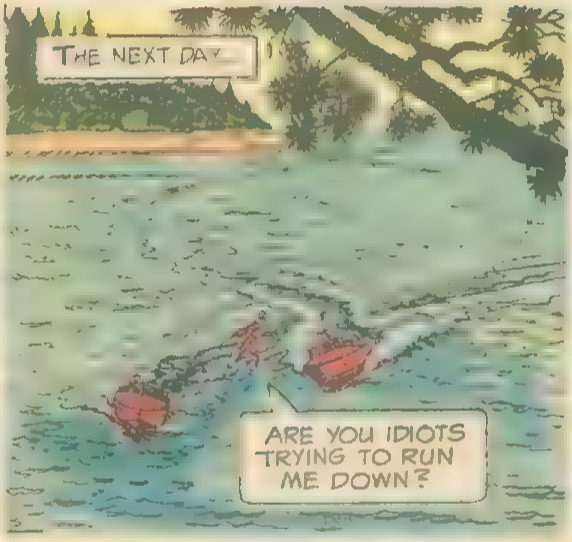

WEEKS LATER, AT AN AMERICAN HOTEL...
THAT IS THE GIRL, DIANA PALMER. OUR MEN HAVE TRAILED HER HERE. WE MUST GET HER TONIGHT!


THAT NIGHT...
62

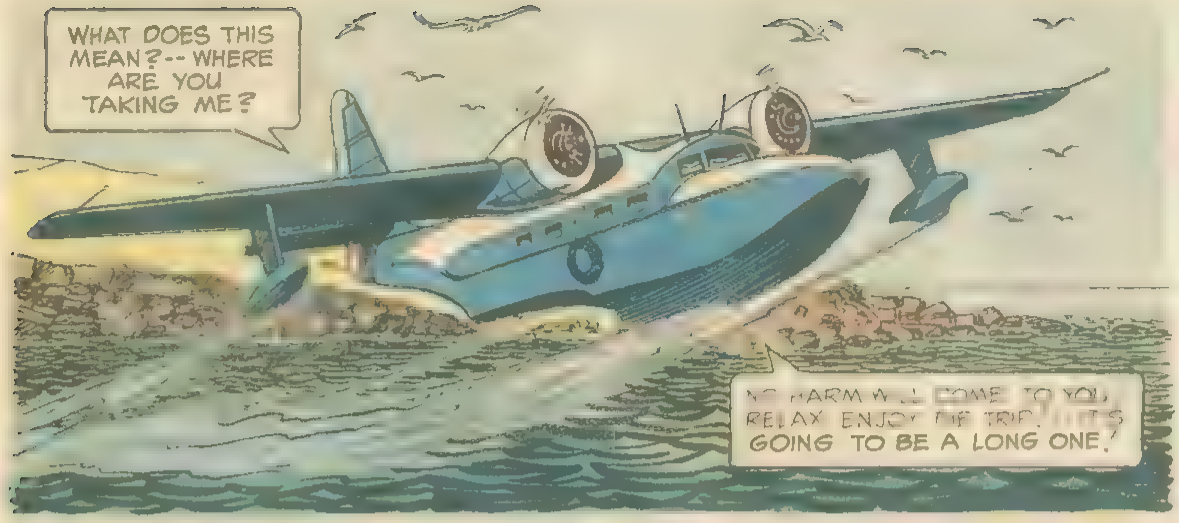
NO NOISE, LADY! I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU!
THANK YOU, BUT--

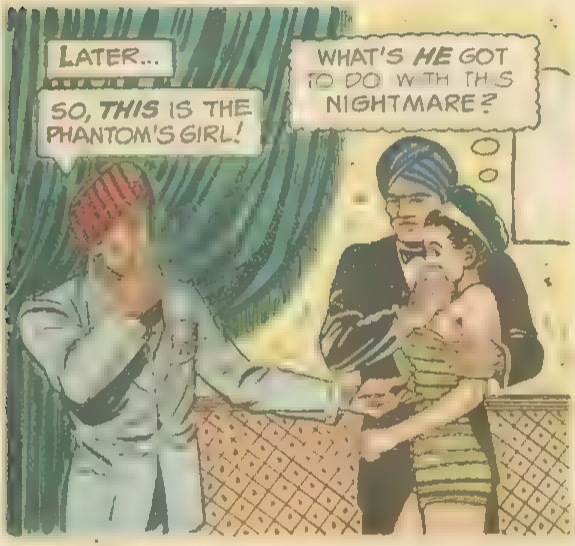
--I CAN'T SAY THE SAME FOR YOU!


WHAT?... THE GIRL TOSSED YOU?-- THAT PRETTY LITTLE THING?
SHE SURPRISED ME!--ALMOST BROKE MY SHOULDER!

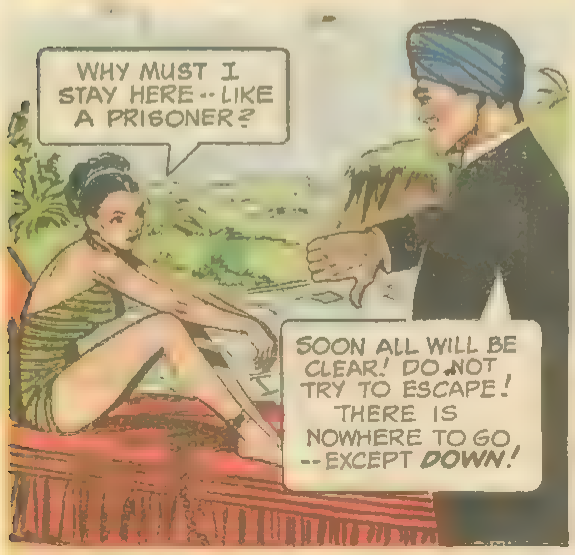

THE NEXT DAY...
ARE YOU IDIOTS TRYING TO RUN ME DOWN?

LET GO, YOU FOOL!


WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?-- WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
NO HARM WILL COME TO YOU. RELAX. ENJOY THE TRIP. IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG ONE!


LATER...
SO, THIS IS THE PHANTOM'S GIRL!
WHAT'S HE GOT TO DO WITH THIS NIGHTMARE?

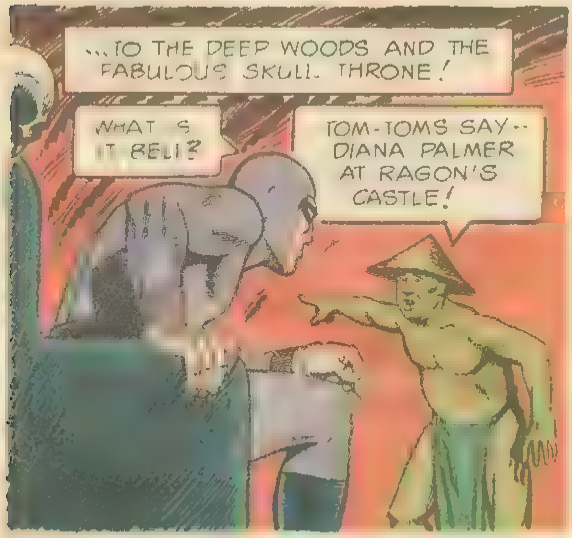
YOU WILL STAY HERE! I DO NOT THINK YOU WILL HAVE LONG TO WAIT!


WHY MUST I STAY HERE -- LIKE A PRISONER?
SOON ALL WILL BE CLEAR! DO NOT TRY TO ESCAPE! THERE IS NOWHERE TO GO -- EXCEPT DOWN!

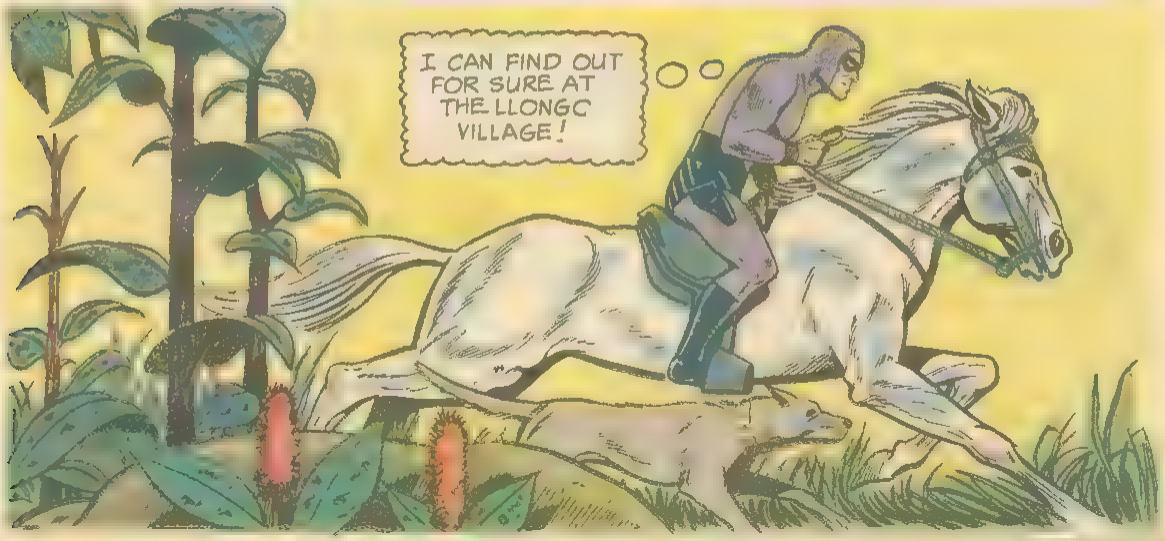
S THE LURE IN PLACE?
YES
AS SOON AS THE PHANTOM KNOWS -- YOUR GAME WILL BEGIN!

LATER, IN THE LLONGO VILLAGE...
YES, I AM BEST LLONGO DRUMMER!
GOOD! I'LL PAY WELL TO GET THIS MESSAGE TO THE WAMBESI!

VIZA'S MESSAGE SPEEDS ACROSS THE MILES...
DIANA PALMER AT RAGON'S CASTLE--

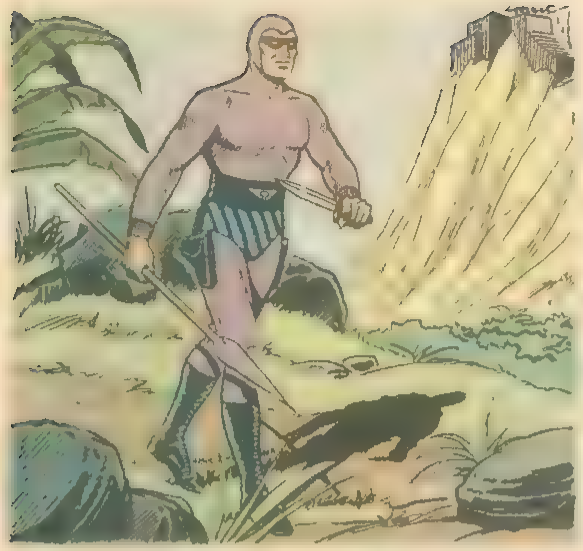

...TO THE DEEP WOODS AND THE FABULOUS SKULL THRONE!
WHAT'S IT, BELI?
TOM-TOMS SAY-- DIANA PALMER AT RAGON'S CASTLE!

DIANA'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE EARTH! -- THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE!


I CAN FIND OUT FOR SURE AT THE LLONGO VILLAGE!

YES, O GHOST WHO WALKS, THAT WAS THE MESSAGE I SENT! A STRANGER GAVE IT TO ME!
ONLY ONE PLACE TO GO NOW... RAGON'S CASTLE!
SOON...
IT IS... DIANA! ON RAGON'S BALCONY OF THE GAME!

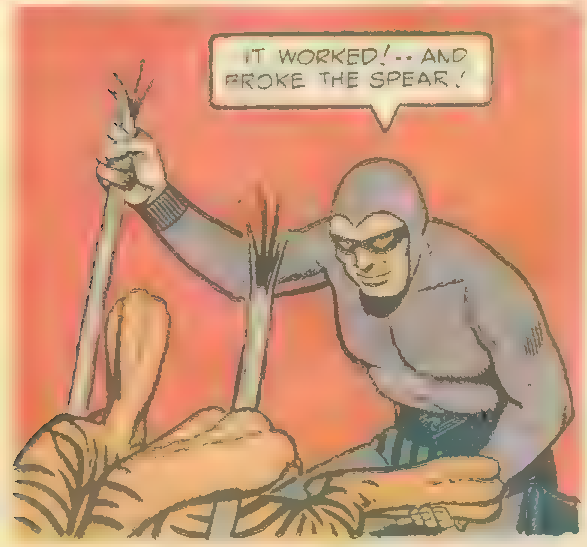
NO REASON FOR ME TO FACE THE OBSTACLES IN THE VALLEY, HEY, BOY? I'LL GO AROUND THE BACK WAY!
THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY! THROUGH THE VALLEY AND THE GAME!
IF YOU WISH, YOU MAY TURN BACK NOW AND RETURN TO THE JUNGLE!
IF I DO, WHAT HAPPENS TO DIANA?
SHE STAYS, OF COURSE!
--THEN I'LL PLAY RAGON'S GAME!-- I HAVE NO CHOICE!

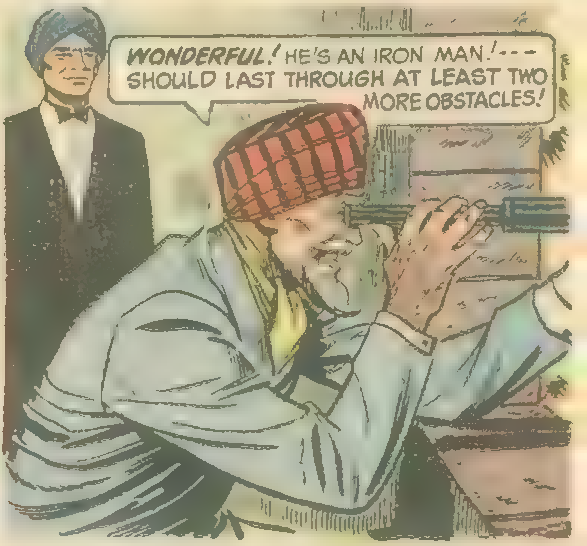


SOMEONE'S COMING THROUGH THE VALLEY ON FOOT! WHO CAN IT BE?

IT WAS RIGHT ABOUT HERE GILL FACED THAT LION!

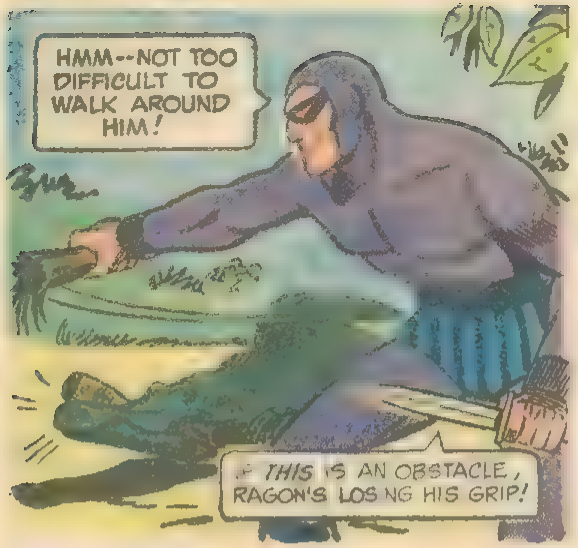
AH -- NOW -- THE *FIGHT!*


IT WORKED! -- AND BROKE THE SPEAR!


WONDERFUL! HE'S AN IRON MAN! --- SHOULD LAST THROUGH AT LEAST TWO MORE OBSTACLES!

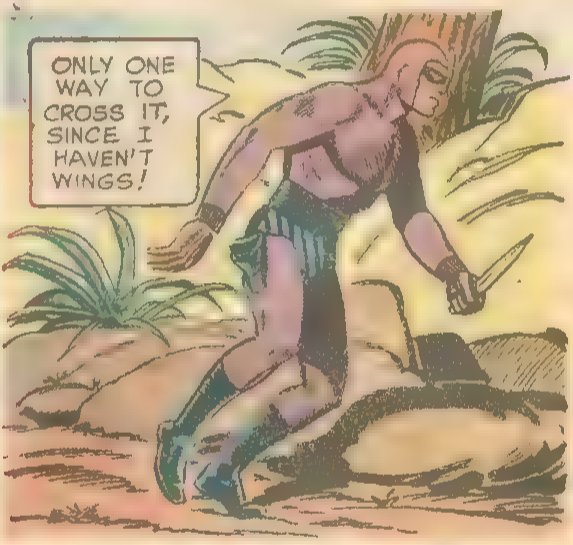
THERE ARE SEVEN OBSTACLES IN ALL! -- WONDER WHAT'S NEXT!

A CROCODILE! -- WHAT A WHOPPER!

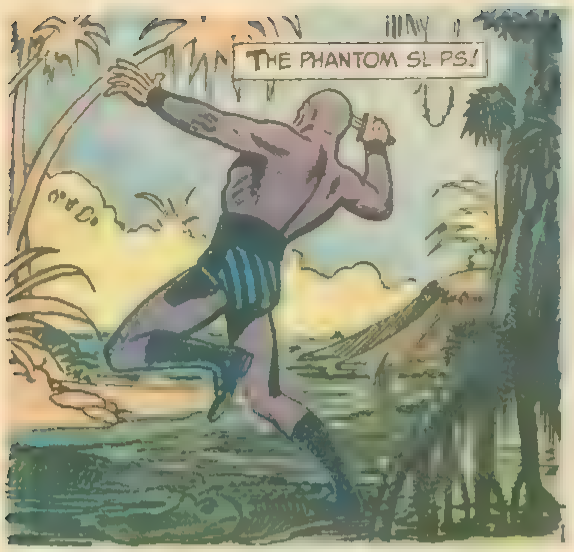

HMM--NOT TOO DIFFICULT TO WALK AROUND HIM!
IF THIS IS AN OBSTACLE, RAGON'S LOSING HIS GRIP!

WHOA-- THIS IS THE SECOND OBSTACLE!

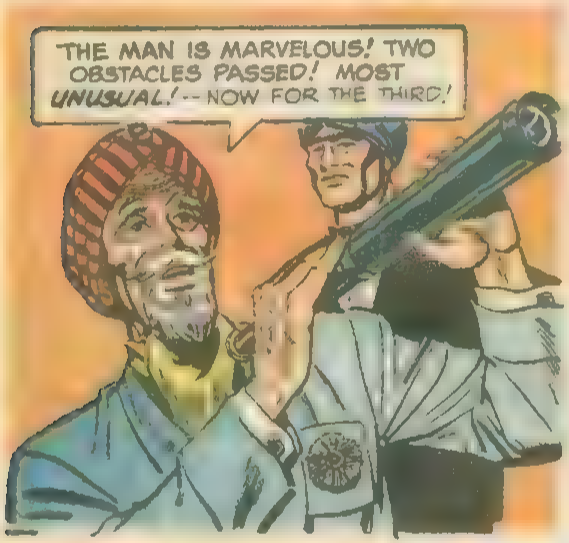
IMPOSSIBLE TO GO ANY FURTHER WITHOUT CROSSING THIS STREAM!


ONLY ONE WAY TO CROSS IT, SINCE I HAVEN'T WINGS!

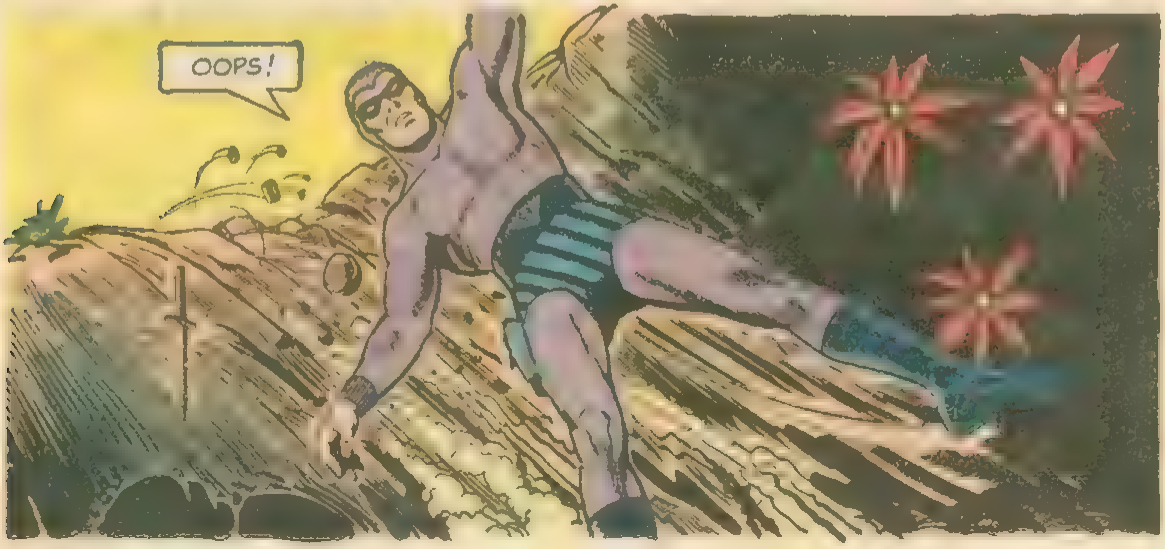
HE RUNS ACROSS THE ROUGH BACKS!-- HUGE JAWS GAPE WIDE NEAR HIM!

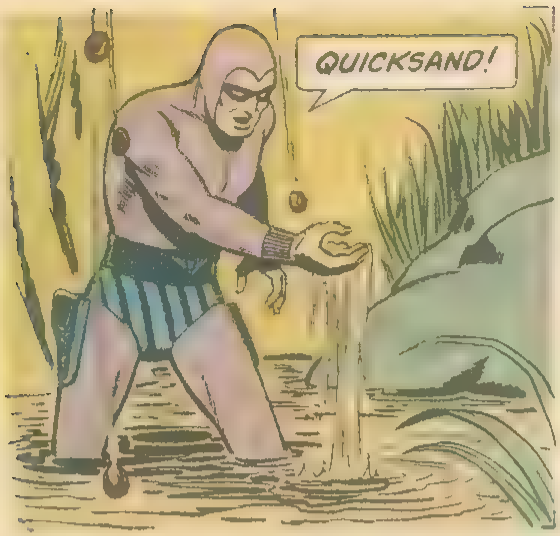

THE PHANTOM SLIPS!

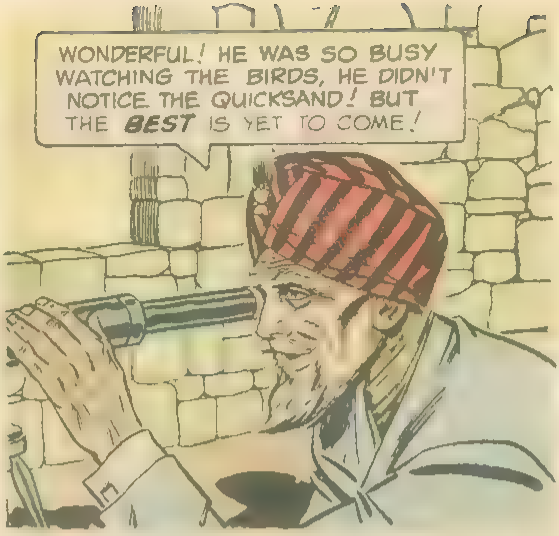
--THEN LEAPS TO SHORE -- JUST IN TIME!

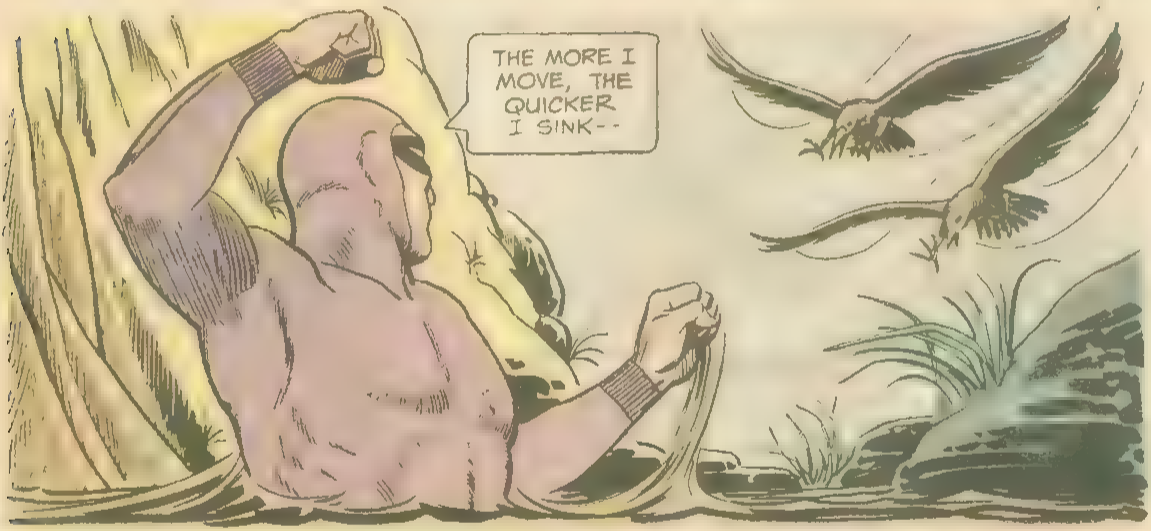

THE MAN IS MARVELOUS! TWO OBSTACLES PASSED! MOST UNUSUAL! -- NOW FOR THE THIRD!

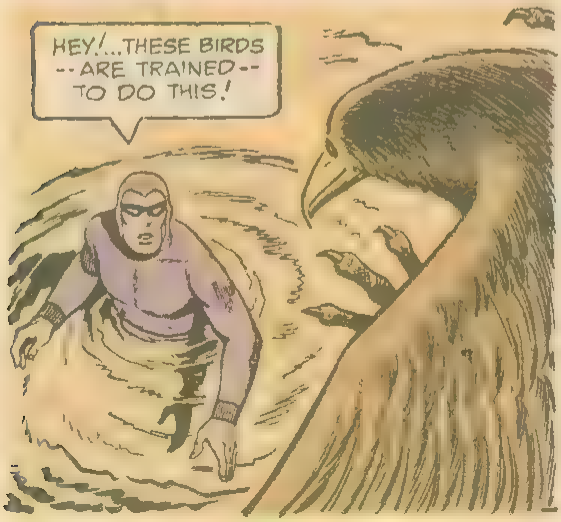
THOSE HAWKS! --ENORMOUS!
THEY DON'T BELONG IN THESE MOUNTAINS!

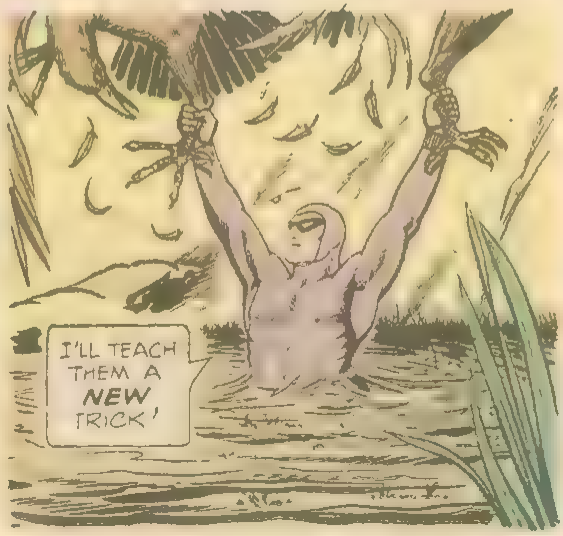

OOPS!

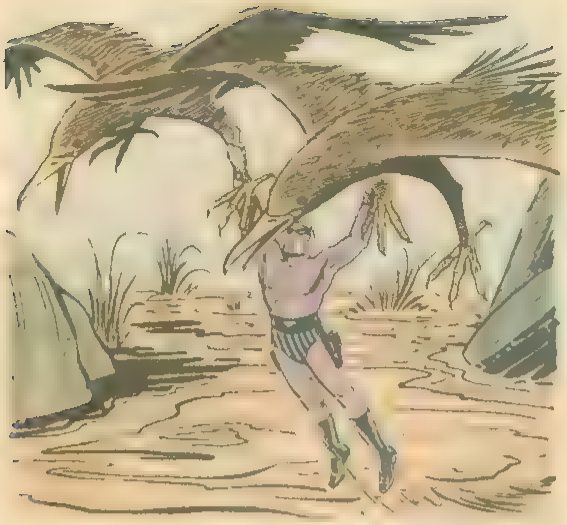

QUICKSAND!

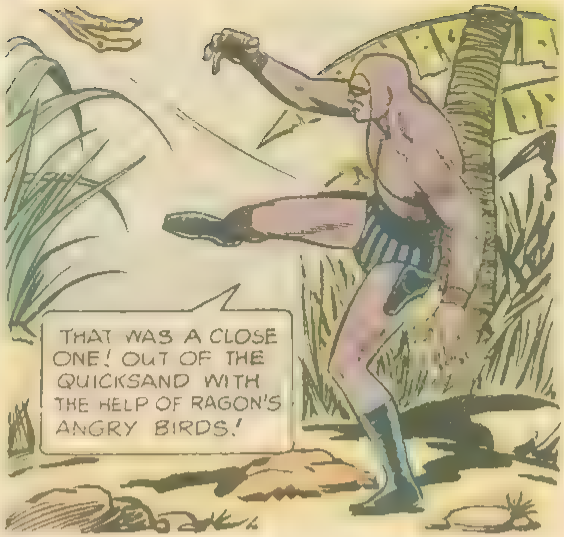

WONDERFUL! HE WAS SO BUSY WATCHING THE BIRDS, HE DIDN'T NOTICE THE QUICKSAND! BUT THE BEST IS YET TO COME!


THE MORE I MOVE, THE QUICKER I SINK--


HEY!...THESE BIRDS --ARE TRAINED-- TO DO THIS!

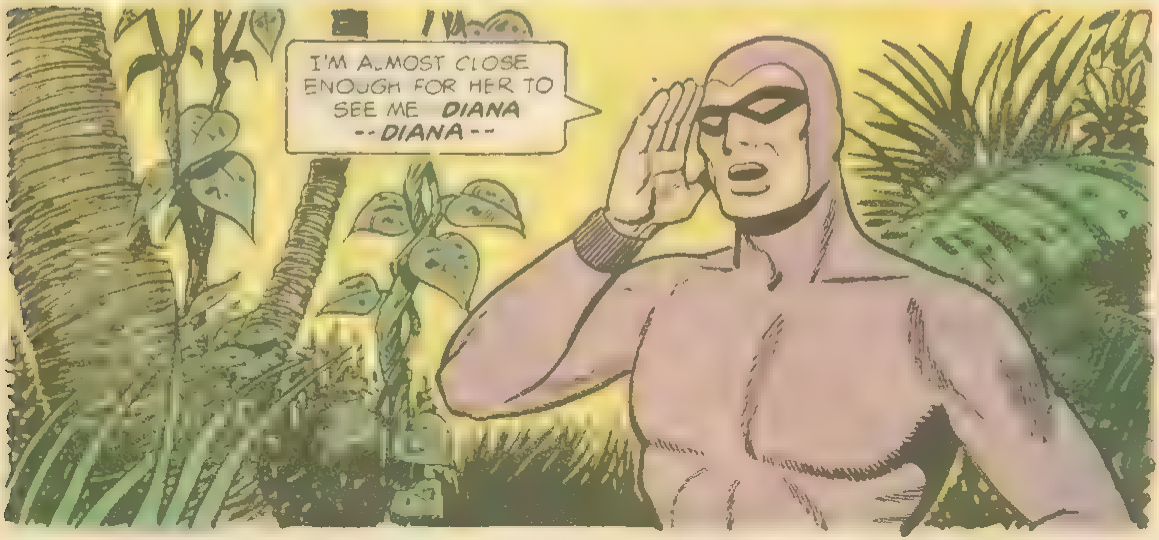

I'LL TEACH THEM A NEW TRICK!



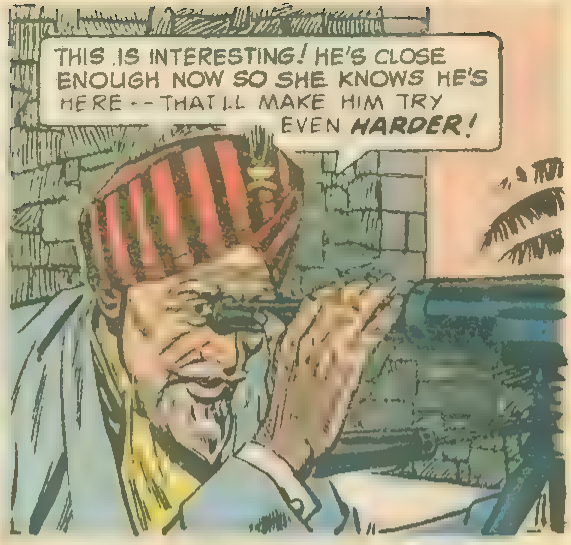

THAT WAS A CLOSE ONE! OUT OF THE QUICKSAND WITH THE HELP OF RAGON'S ANGRY BIRDS!

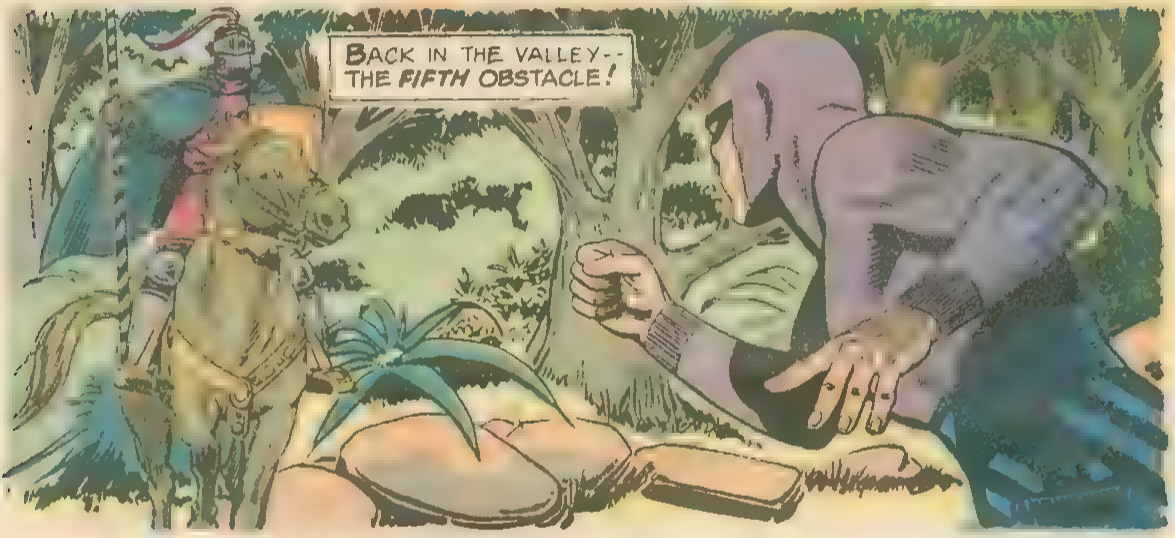
NO ONE HAS EVER GOTTEN THIS FAR! HE'S PASSED THE THIRD- AND FOURTH - OBSTACLES!

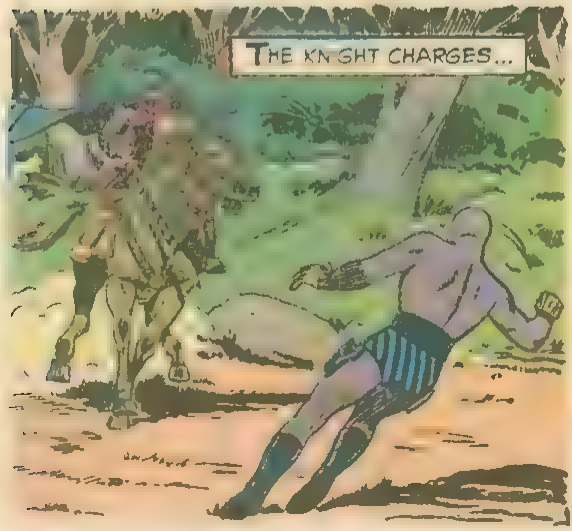
THAT MAN DOWN THERE -- NO -- IT COULDN'T BE!

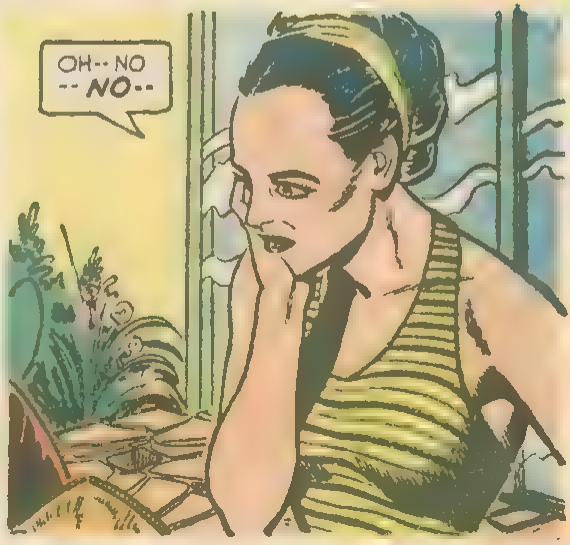

I'M ALMOST CLOSE ENOUGH FOR HER TO SEE ME DIANA -- DIANA --

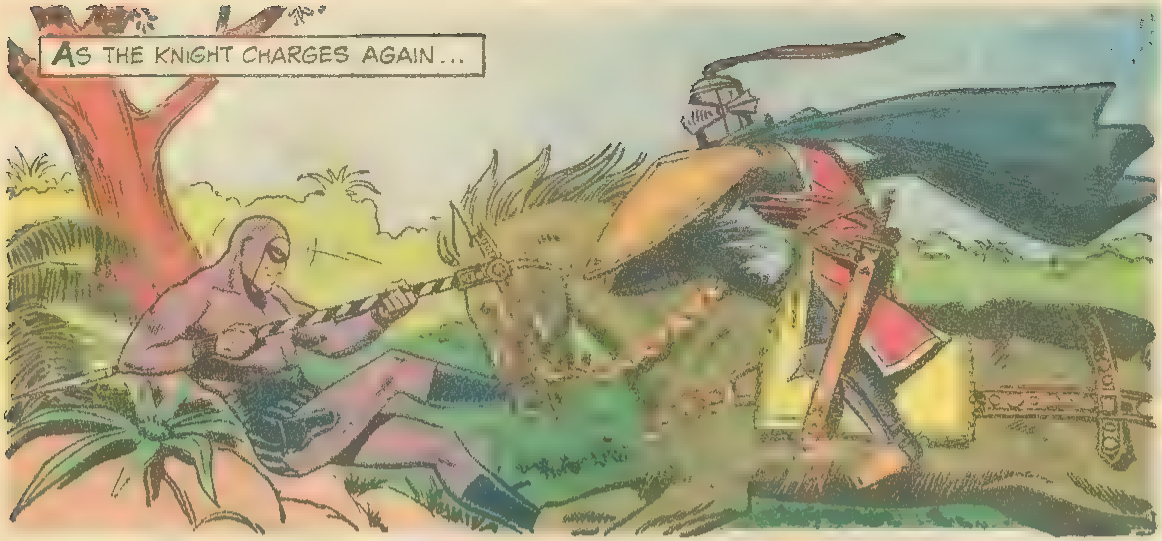
DIANA-- DIANA--
IT IS -- MY DARLING!

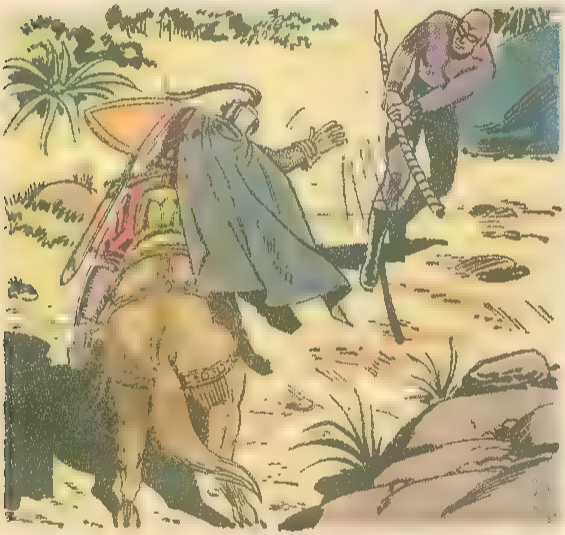

THIS IS INTERESTING! HE'S CLOSE ENOUGH NOW SO SHE KNOWS HE'S HERE -- THAT'LL MAKE HIM TRY EVEN HARDER!


BACK IN THE VALLEY-- THE FIFTH OBSTACLE!

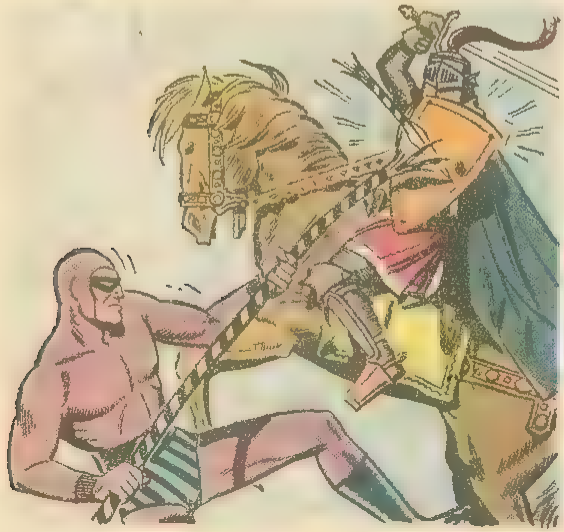

THE KNIGHT CHARGES...

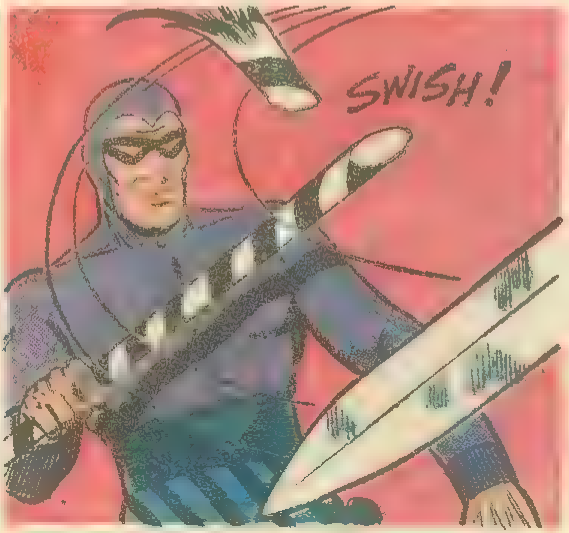

OH-- NO -- NO--


AS THE KNIGHT CHARGES AGAIN...

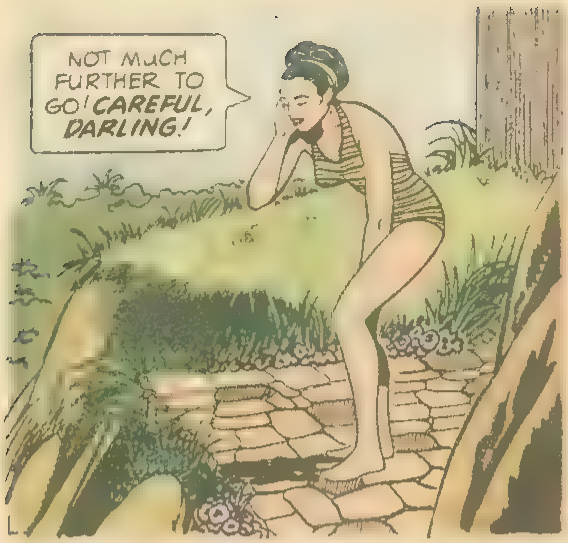


NOW WE'RE MORE EVEN!

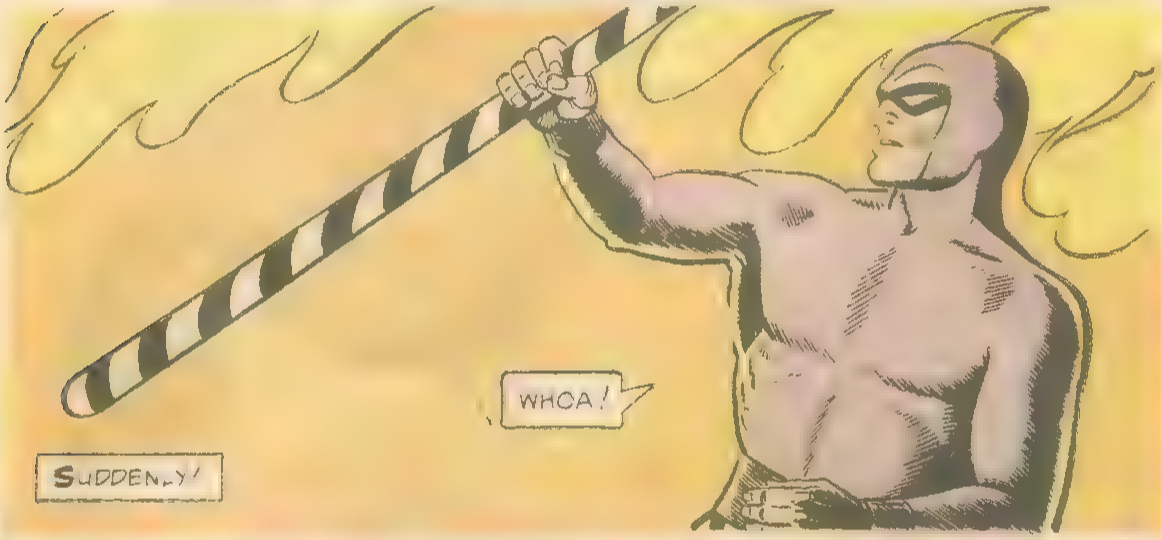



SWISH!

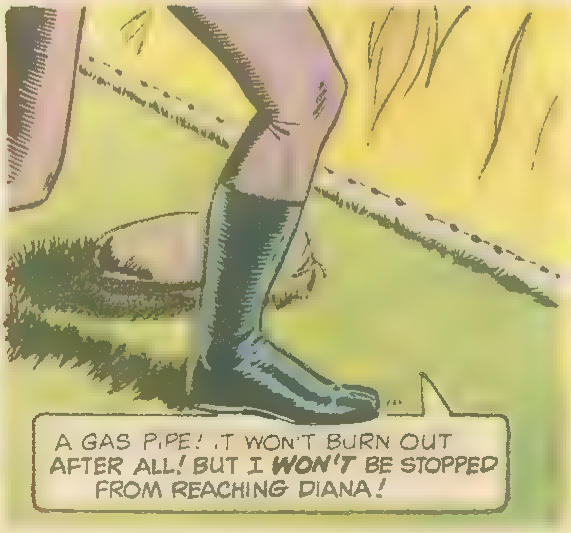
BEST WAY TO HANDLE A TORTOISE IS TO GET HIM ON HIS BACK!
DON'T -- DON'T KILL ME!
WOULD YOU HAVE SPARED ME?
I WON'T HURT YOU! YOU'RE ONLY WORKING FOR RAGON!
THANK YOU! -- THANK YOU!
I'M GOING TO END THIS FIENDISH GAME! GET GOING!


NOT MUCH FURTHER TO GO! CAREFUL, DARLING!

CAREFUL IS RIGHT! STILL TWO OBSTACLES TO GO!

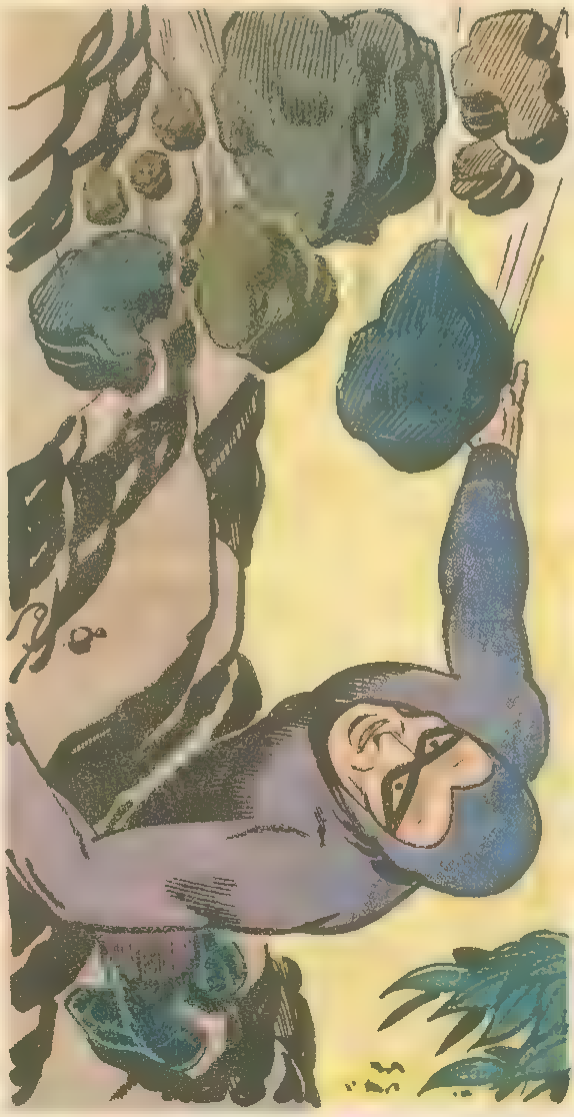

WHOA!
SUDDENLY!

A FIRE LIKE THAT CAN'T BURN LONG! I THINK-- IF I WAIT--

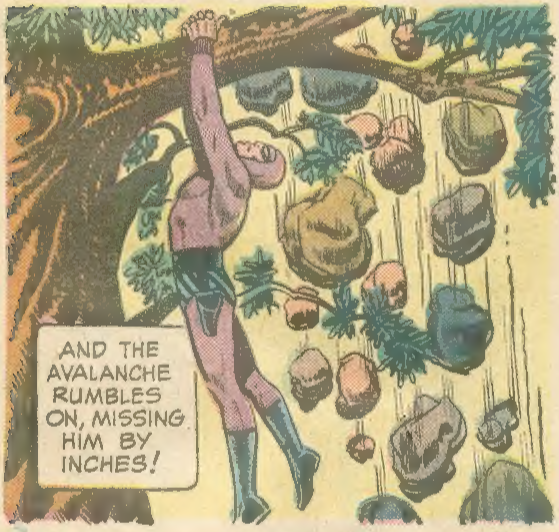

A GAS PIPE! IT WON'T BURN OUT AFTER ALL! BUT I WON'T BE STOPPED FROM REACHING DIANA!

NO ONE'S EVER GOTTEN THIS FAR! BUT THE LAST OBSTACLE WILL STOP HIM!

DARLING!-- LOOK OUT!



HE DIVES INTO THE AIR--

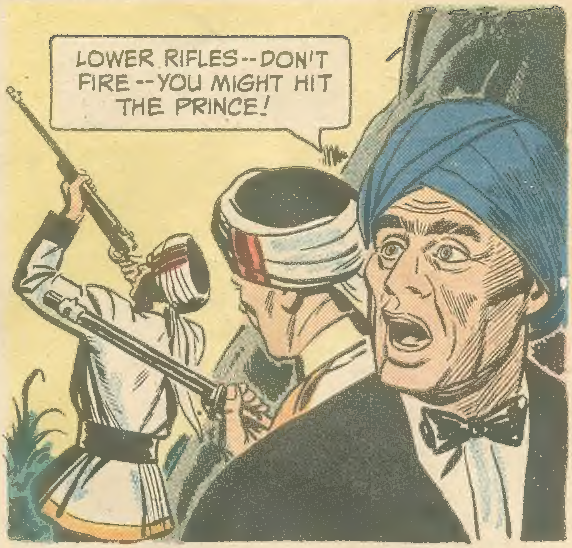

AND THE AVALANCHE RUMBLES ON, MISSING HIM BY INCHES!

IMPOSSIBLE! NO ONE'S EVER WON THIS GAME! HE'LL TELL OTHERS AND RUIN ANY FUTURE GAMES!

THEN HE CAN TAKE HIS PRIZE--DIANA--AND GO?
NONSENSE! MY MEN WILL TAKE CARE OF HIM!

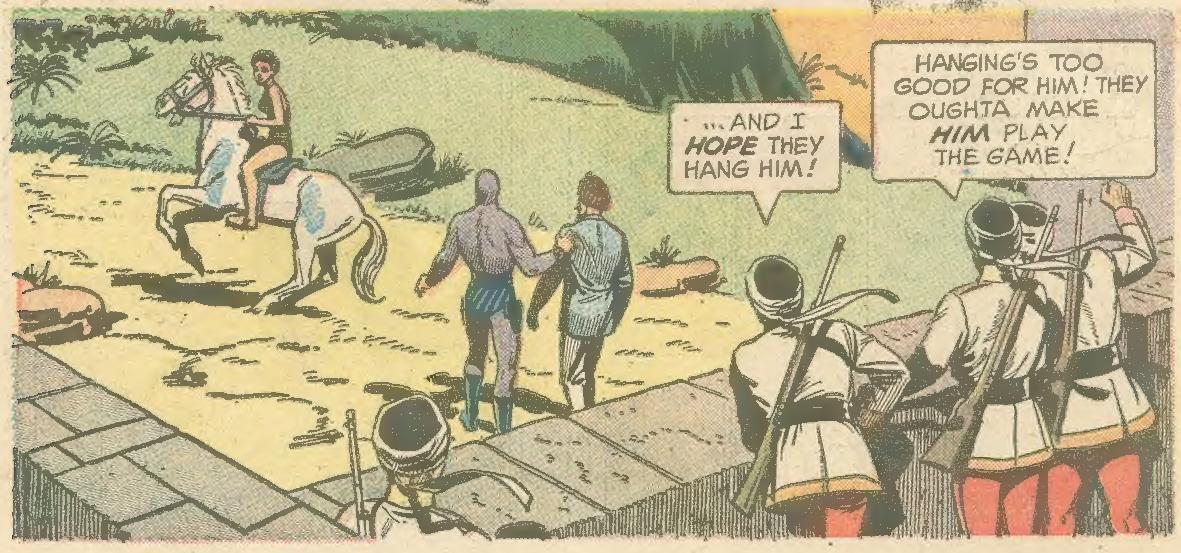
DIANA!--AT LAST!
DON'T COME UP! GO DOWN!
HURRY! RAGON'S SOLDIERS!

THE PHANTOM HAS REACHED THE ONLY POSSIBLE SAFE PLACE!
AT LAST--RAGON!


LOWER RIFLES--DON'T FIRE--YOU MIGHT HIT THE PRINCE!

ORDER YOUR ARMY TO DROP THEIR GUNS OR OVER YOU GO!

WHAT A MAN!
MY MAN!


...AND I HOPE THEY HANG HIM!
HANGING'S TOO GOOD FOR HIM! THEY OUGHTA MAKE HIM PLAY THE GAME!

THE PHANTOM
ALL THE WORLD KNOWS THE SIGN OF THE SKULL, THE MARK OF THE PHANTOM!

--DELIVERED TO EVIL-DOERS BY THE HARD RIGHT FIST OF THE PHANTOM!

LESS IS KNOWN OF THE PHANTOM'S GOOD MARK, DELIVERED GENTLY BY HIS LEFT FIST.

THE LUCKY FEW WHO RECEIVE THIS MARK CARRY IT FOR LIFE.

WITH THE GOOD MARK GOES THE PROTECTION OF THE PHANTOM FOR THE ONE WHO RECEIVES IT AND FOR ALL HIS DESCENDENTS!

THE PHANTOM
PIN-UP NO. 1